

Stewart Air National Guard Base located in Newburgh, NY, is the proud home of the 105th Airlift Wing, an Air Mobility Command (AMC)-gained unit of the New York Air National Guard. Rich in history and tradition, Stewart employs more than 660 fulltime and part-time military members and some 1,700 traditional Guardsman. The unit has served New York State and Orange County for decades and has been involved in a myriad of humanitarian, wartime and peacetime operations ranging from Vietnam and Desert Storm to the tragic events of Sept. 11, 2001 and Hurricane Katrina.

Stewart Airfield was originally named in honor of Scottish-born sea captain, Lachlan Stewart, who skippered schooners and other sailing vessels in the years 1850 to 1870. The original tract of land, whereby the installation now sits on some 250 acres, was donated by his son, Samuel L. Stewart, to the City of Newburgh in 1930 for use as a municipal airport. It was at this time that plans were first laid to establish a flying facility for the Air Corps detachment stationed at the United States Military Academy at West Point.

Stewart's colorful military history is vast and it began more than 50 years ago when the 137th Fighter Squadron of the New York Air National Guard received Federal recognition and officially began military operations at the Westchester County Airport in White Plains, NY. The unit was initially equipped with the F-47 "Thunderbolt" aircraft and provided many years of loyal service to the Nation flying missions both stateside and overseas.

In September 1952, the unit was redesignated the 137th Fighter Interceptor Squadron and received the F-51 "Mustang" aircraft, as well as a new air defense mission. In 1953, the unit entered the "jet age" when it received the F-94 "Starfighter," a versatile all-weather interceptor. The unit subsequently retained its air defense mission until 1958 when it converted to the famed F-86 "Saber Jet" and was reorganized as the 105th Tactical Fighter Group.

In February 1961, the unit was again redesignated as the 105th Aero Medical Transport Group and received its first C-119 "Flying Boxcar" aircraft. The unit later converted to the C-97 "Stratocruiser," a four-engine strategic transport aircraft that gallantly and reliably participated in worldwide military airlift missions to include numerous Southeast Asia operations.

A more recent phase of the unit's history began in 1970 with its redesignation as the 105th Tactical Air Support Group. The unit's goal was now focused on completing forward air control and communications missions flying the small but vitally important O-2A "Skymaster" aircraft for the Tactical Air Command. Then, in May of 1983, the unit relocated to its current home at Stewart International Airport. It was redesignated the 105th Military Airlift Group in May of 1984, and then in July of 1985 became the first Air National Guard unit to fly Lockheed Martin's mighty C-5 "Galaxy." Concluding its transformation; in October of 1995, the unit was finally named the 105th Airlift Wing. To this day the brave men and women that call Stewart home continue to provide faithful service to America and all those in New York State.

Stewart Air National Guard Base currently has 13 giant C-5 airframes in service and is one of only three ANG units with the C-5 mission. It shares this distinct honor with the 164th Airlift Wing in Memphis, TN, and the 167th Airlift Wing in Martinsburg, WV. The C-5 is a military transport aircraft built by Lockheed Martin, and it was designed to provide strategic heavy airlift

over intercontinental distances and to carry outsize and oversize cargo to the most remote airfields on the map.

The C-5 has been operated by the U.S. Air Force since 1969 and is one of the largest fixed-wing aircraft in the world. The only other military airframe in comparison is the slightly longer Russian-made Antonov An-225, which first flew in December of 1988 to help support the country's ongoing space program. However, there are few Antonov airframes still serviceable and the track record for that airframe is nowhere near as successful as the C-5's.

A true modern marvel, the C-5 measures a staggering 247.8 feet and has a wingspan of 222.8 feet. The aircraft is longer than a football field and also wider. It towers 65 plus feet in height and the aircraft's "T-tail" alone is nearly as high as a six-story building. Each of the C-5's four GE TF-39 turbofan engines, rated at 43,000 pounds of thrust, has an intake of approximately 1,500 pounds of air per second. At this rate, a structure the size of the Houston Astrodome would be emptied of air in less than five minutes. To put that into more perspective: the total engine power of a C-5 equals that of 800 average automobiles. The aircraft can be loaded from both the front and rear, and the cargo hold is capable of transporting everything from troops and supplies to tanks and tractor trailers.

The 105th Airlift Wing regularly flies AMC channel missions between the eastern United States and Europe. Additional AMC airlift missions have been flown as far west as Thailand, east to Pakistan and India, north to Alaska and Finland, and south to Uruguay, Ascension Island and Zimbabwe. The unit also has a longstanding tradition of providing humanitarian support, which began shortly after receiving its first C-5 in October of 1985 when the unit airlifted 84,600 pounds of cots and bedding to Puerto Rico following Hurricane Gloria.

In October 1988, the 105th transported 300,000 pounds of hurricane relief and reconstruction supplies to the island nation of Jamaica following Hurricane Gilbert. In January 1989, the unit again carried 146,610 pounds of earthquake relief supplies to Soviet Armenia. Then, in March 1989, the 105th responded in less than 24 hours to an AMC request to airlift an 80,000 pound submersible vehicle from Andrews AFB to Kadena AFB in Japan, to assist in search and recovery operations for an Air Force HH-3 helicopter which crashed in the East China Sea.

Throughout the summer and fall of 1989, the 105th continued to support reconstruction efforts in Jamaica by airlifting National Guard civil engineering teams and equipment to the hurricane-ravaged island. Beginning in October 1989, the unit responded to another storm, Hurricane Hugo, transporting more than 2 million pounds of relief supplies to Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands.

In December 1991, the 105th carried more than 145,000 pounds of clothing, blankets and medical supplies to Bucharest, Romania. In February 1992, the unit participated in Operation Provide Hope, the airlift of humanitarian aid to the Commonwealth of Independent States (the former Soviet Union), delivering 384,000 pounds of relief materials to Saint Petersburg, Russia, and Yerevan, Armenia.

In September 1992, the unit responded to South Florida, delivering more than 1 million pounds of food, tents, mobile kitchens, vehicles and emergency services personnel after Hurricane Andrew hit the Homestead area. In November 1992, the 105th airlifted 118,450 pounds of cargo, including generators, portable shelters and medical supplies and equipment to Zagreb, Croatia, to support the U.S. Army's 212th Mobile Army Surgical Hospital.

From December 1992 to April 1993, the 105th supported Operation Restore Hope providing humanitarian airlift of 2,800,000 pounds of supplies and more than 600 passengers into Somalia. Following massive flooding in the central United States in July 1993, the unit airlifted 10 reverse osmosis water purification systems weighing more than 380,000 pounds and capable of providing more than 600,000 gallons of potable water a day to Des Moines, Iowa. In August 1993, the unit carried 75 tons of relief supplies and equipment to southern Turkey to be used to help Kurdish refugees from Iraqi terrorism.

In October 1993, the 105th returned to Somalia, delivering military personnel and almost 860,000 pounds of equipment (non-stop and with triple air refueling) directly from bases in the United States to Mogadishu. In July 1994, 105th aircraft began carrying humanitarian relief supplies to the people of Rwanda, and by early September some 1,635,189 pounds of supplies and equipment were delivered to East Africa.

In late September 1994, the unit began airlifting more than a million pounds of supplies and equipment to Haiti as part of Operation Uphold Democracy. The 105th played a key role in July of 1995 for Operation Quick Lift when it airlifted 431,000 pounds of cargo and 190 British troops from RAF Brise Norton, United Kingdom, to Split, Croatia, in support of the United Nations' Rapid Reaction Deployment Force.

Immediately following Hurricane Marilyn in September 1995, the unit airlifted 527,200 pounds of desperately needed supplies and equipment to the citizens of the American Virgin Islands. In December 1995, 105th Airlift Wing C-5 crews embarked on the first of six missions in support of President Clinton's peacekeeping mission in Bosnia, transporting almost 800,000 pounds of U.S. Army support equipment to the European theater.

In March 1996, the 105th participated in Partners in Peace; a joint-force operation bringing needed office supplies to Rwanda for the War Crimes Tribunal. The mission also carried medical supplies for the World Food Program. In September of 1996, the 105th returned to Puerto Rico, delivering 22,000 pounds of bedding after the island was hit by Hurricane Hortense. In April 1997, the 105th flew 160,000 pounds of produce and fruit to Fargo, North Dakota, after flooding there forced thousands from their homes.

In January 1998, during the Martin Luther King holiday weekend, the 105th Airlift Wing became a hub for northern New York ice storm relief activity as unit members received and downloaded 70 emergency generators from five C-5 aircraft. The 105th also loaded the 7,500 pound generators onto Army Guard flatbeds for transport upstate to the ice storm victims.

The 105th again assisted their northern state neighbors by helping clean up communities damaged by a tornado in late May of 1998. In June, more than 100 fulltime and traditional guard volunteers traveled to Rensselaer County, NY; to remove debris, provide food service and lodging assistance and traffic control assistance.

In September 1998, the unit flew five missions in support of AMC relief missions to the Caribbean after Hurricane Georges hit the area. The 105th flew five missions carrying a total of 294.9 tons of supplies to Puerto Rico. More recently, 105th aircrews flew countless missions in 2004 to support Tsunami relief efforts overseas. Then, in 2005, the 105th again responded stateside to support relief efforts in the wake of Hurricane Katrina.

In times of war and national crisis, 105th aircrews heed the Nation's call to action. In fact, 1989 ended on a dramatic note for the 105th as it performed its wartime mission in support of Operation Just Cause. The more than 2,200,000 pounds of cargo airlifted by the 105th in support of that operation represented approximately 25 percent of the initial total airlift effort of all the Military Airlift Command's C-5 fleet assigned to both active duty and reserve component elements.

On August 7, 1990, Governor Mario Cuomo announced that the Department of Defense had requested, and he had approved, the participation of the personnel and C-5A aircraft of the 105th in active and direct support of Operation Desert Shield in the Persian Gulf region. On August 24, the 137th Military Airlift Squadron was called to active duty by President Bush to provide continued support for this operation.

While the 137th was formally deactivated on May 15, 1991, the majority of unit members chose to remain in active status until August 1991 in response to the Air Mobility Command's need for continuing airlift support of Operations Desert Storm and Provide Comfort (Kurdish relief). By the end of May 1991, the 137th MAS had achieved a total of 836 missions, 1,391 sorties, 17,974 passengers transported, and 76.8 million pounds of cargo sent across 2.9 million air miles.

On February 28, 1991, a part of the 105th U.S. Air Force Clinic was also called to active duty with duty stations at Malcolm Grow Medical Center, Andrews Air Force Base, MD. All medical personnel were released from active duty during May 1991.

In October 1994, 105th aircraft and volunteer crews played a key role in Operations Vigilant Warrior and Southern Watch, deterring potential Iraqi aggression in the Arabian Peninsula. In August 1995, the 105th played a key role in airlifting personnel and equipment to Kuwait in support of Operation Vigilant Warrior II and Exercise Intrinsic Action. In February 1998, the 105th flew four missions and 336,005 pounds of cargo in support of Operation Phoenix Scorpion, in a continuing effort to deter potential Iraqi aggression.

The tragic events of September 11, 2001 affected the entire nation, and the 105th felt the devastating effects of that catastrophe as well. Almost immediately after the initial terrorist attacks, 105th flight crews and security forces personnel were called to federal active duty to

support operations Noble Eagle and Enduring Freedom. Pilots and aircrews from the 137th Airlift Squadron flew over a million tons of cargo in 2002 alone, while security forces members deployed to various overseas locations, including Afghanistan and Iraq.

With the onset of Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2003, the 105th was again called upon to provide manpower and equipment for the Air Force. At the peak of Iraqi freedom, over 600 men and women from the 105th were federally activated, and a number of them were deployed. Airlift totals for OIF exceeded 7,530 flying hours, 1.2 million tons of cargo and 15,000 passengers.